

INTEGRATED KEYPAD INTERFACE FOR A PERSONAL DIGITAL ASSISTANT DEVICE

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

One embodiment in accordance with the present invention includes a “plug-in” button module for a personal digital assistant (PDA). Specifically, the “plug-in” button module includes a button frame module having a membrane layer (e.g., thermo-plastic urethane or thermo-plastic elastomer) molded over it. The plug-in module can be snapped into the PDA over its button array. In this manner, the plug-in button module provides a seal for the buttons of the PDA that restricts dirt, grim, and other foreign particles from getting underneath them. Furthermore, since the plug-in button module is modular, it can be manufactured separately from the rest of the PDA in a wide variety of ways. For example, the membrane layer of the plug-in button module can be fabricated with different shapes, colors, hardnesses, decorations, textures, and opacities. In this manner, a user is able to personalize their PDA by snapping in a particular plug-in button module.

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